



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Chris Conlan (858) 694-3595

Two More Birds Test Positive for West Nile virus ***Birds Continue To Test Positive While Mosquito Season Is Winding Down***

County Vector Control officials announced today that two additional dead birds tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing San Diego County's West Nile virus count to 30 dead birds and two horses. Both birds were collected on September 28th, one from Rancho Bernardo and the other from Alpine.

"We are now nearing the end of the mosquito season. As the weather cools off, mosquitoes will stop breeding. However, we still need to remain vigilant and urge the public to eliminate backyard-breeding sources. If we have a warm spell, mosquitoes can reproduce in as little as one week," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health.

To date, San Diego County Vector Control has collected and submitted for testing 292 dead birds. California has been severely impacted by the virus. While San Diego County still has no locally acquired human illnesses, there have been 732 human illnesses and 19 human deaths in California, primarily in Southern California.

Vector Control continues to pick up and test crows, ravens, jays, hawks, owls, and falcons to monitor the spread of the virus. The public is encouraged to report dead birds if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours; do not have a foul odor; are not covered with ants or flies; are not stiff; and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals. Placing a bag of ice over the bird will help to preserve it until Vector Control staff can collect the specimen for testing. All other dead birds should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded in a covered trashcan. While you cannot get West Nile virus from dead birds, wear disposable gloves if you must handle birds.

You can protect yourself from the virus by: staying inside at dawn and dusk; wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors; and by using an insect repellent containing DEET when you must be outdoors. Keep screens on doors and windows and make sure they are in good repair. For more information on West Nile virus, or to report mosquito breeding sites or dead birds please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636). You can also visit the official County West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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